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ABSTRACT

This "insider's guide" to American and Japanese communication and misunderstanding is based on the premise that Americans and Japanese have different goals in communication; the American goal is to make messages negotiated between individuals explicit, while the Japanese goal is to keep messages implicit and assumed within the group. In the first chapter, it is explained that by idealizing different aspects of language and relationship, and assigning contrastive weights to them, Americans and Japanese use and interpret communication in ways that are effective and make sense in their own group, but often get miscommunicated and confused across groups. Chapter 2 discusses key aspects of American English and Japanese grammar, and what each symbolizes for the native speaker. Chapter 3 describes some basic communication strategies, comparing Japanese and American conventions in naming, agreeing, disagreeing, thinking, and apologizing. Chapter 4 examines the assumptions of American and Japanese business communication, underscoring that these interactions are part of, not separate from, social interaction. In chapters 5 through 8, specific patterns of business communication are contrasted. The final chapter is a critical examination of American English in the United States and the Japanese language in Japan. (MSE)

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